

Message Text

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SUBJECT: FEBRUARY 1 PRESS ROUNDUP

1. RICHARD BURT OF NEW YORK TIMES REPORTED THAT PENTAGON OFFICIALS ARE STRONGLY OBJECTING TO NEW ACDA REPORT THAT CONCLUDES THAT DEPLOYMENT OF NEUTRON WARHEAD COULD INCREASE CHANCES OF NUCLEAR WAR. BURT SAID "OFFICIALS FEAR THAT STUDY, WHICH EXAMINES POTENTIAL IMPACT OF CONTROVERSIAL WEAPON ON EAST-WEST MILITARY STABILITY AND ARMS CONTROL TALKS WITH SOVIET UNION, COULD JEOPARDIZE CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL OF FUNDS FOR NEUTRON BOMB." BURT SAID ALTHOUGH STUDY, WHICH WAS PREPARED FOR SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS, ARGUES THAT DECISION TO DEPLOY BOMB WOULD HAVE "MINIMAL" IMPACT ON EXISTING NEGOTIATIONS, IT ALSO IS SAID TO ASSERT THAT PRODUCTION OF WEAPON COULD "LOWER THRESHOLD FOR NUCLEAR USE" IN WAR WITH SOVIET UNION. "IN ADDITION, OF-
UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 STATE 027831

FICIALS SAID, STUDY SUGGESTS THAT MOVING AHEAD WITH BOMB MIGHT BE VIEWED BY OTHER NATIONS AS RUNNING COUNTER TO DISARMAMENT GOALS ANNOUNCED BY CARTER ADMINISTRATION. THESE CONCLUSIONS HAVE SET OFF HEATED INTERAGENCY DISPUTE, WITH DEFENSE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS INSISTING THAT STUDY BE REVISED BEFORE IT IS PRESENTED TO CONGRESS. ARMS CONTROL OFFICIALS ARE RESISTING ANY SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN REPORT UNTIL IT

GOES TO WHITE HOUSE FOR APPROVAL BEFORE SUBMISSION TO

CONGRESS. AS RESULT, OFFICIALS SAID, STUDY, WHICH WAS SCHEDULED TO GO TO CONGRESS LAST WEEK, WILL NOT BE DELIVERED UNTIL END OF FEBRUARY. THEY SAID DISPUTE WAS UNLIKELY TO BE RESOLVED WITHOUT WHITE HOUSE INTERVENTION, WHICH WOULD PUT PRESIDENT CARTER IN DIFFICULT POSITION OF HAVING TO DECIDE HOW FAR HE WAS WILLING TO GO IN CRITIZING HIS OWN DEFENSE REQUEST." BURT REPORTED THAT IN AN INTERVIEW, HIGH-RANKING ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL SAID CONCERN OVER DESTRUCTIVENESS OF NEUTRON BOMB HAD BEEN EXAGGERATED AND THAT SOVIET SS-20 "WOULD CAUSE HIGHLY LETHAL INITIAL RADIATION OVER ROUGHLY THREE TIMES AS MUCH AREA AS MOST LETHAL NEUTRON BOMB THAT U.S. PLANS." BURT REPORTED OFFICIAL SAID ALLIED GOVERNMENTS WERE SOON LIKELY TO COMMUNICATE THEIR SUPPORT FOR NEUTRON BOMB AND THAT WHITE HOUSE PROBABLY WOULD ANNOUNCE ITS APPROVAL FOR WEAPON BEFORE CONGRESS VOTES LATER IN SPRING ON PENTAGON REQUEST FOR FISCAL 1979 FUNDS TO BEGIN PRODUCING WEAPON. BURT SAID DEFENSE OFFICIALS VOICED CONCERN THAT ACDA CRITICISM OF NEUTRON BOMB COULD THREATEN ITS CHANCES OF GETTING CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL. TIMES CORRESPONDENT SAID NEUTRON BOMB STUDY IS ONE OF 30 REPORTS ACDA PREPARED RECENTLY FOR SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS TO AID LEGISLATORS IN EXAMINING IMPACT OF NEW WEAPONS PROGRAMS UPON EAST-WEST NEGOTIATIONS.

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PAGE 03 STATE 027831

2. IN DISPATCH FROM GENEVA, NEW YORK TIMES SAID U.S. AND USSR VOICED OPPOSITION IN CCD TO FRENCH PROPOSAL TO SCRAP 30-NATION DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE AS PRINCIPAL ARMS-CONTROL FORUM. TIMES DISPATCH SAID AMBASSADOR FISHER "WAS MORE CIRCUMSPECT THAN SOVIET DELEGATE" IN ALLUDING TO FRENCH PLAN. FISHER, TIMES REPORTED, DID NOT RULE OUT CHANGES IN PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS BUT SAID CHANGES SHOULD BE EFFECTED ONLY IF THEY MADE CONFERENCE MORE EFFECTIVE FORUM. IN AN INDIRECT APPEAL TO FRANCE AND CHINA, FISHER REPORTEDLY SAID U.S. WOULD WELCOME PARTICIPATION BY IMPORTANT NATIONS NOT NOW REPRESENTED. TIMES SAID SOVIET DELEGATE LIKHACHEV ALSO AVOIDED DIRECT MENTION OF FRENCH PROPOSAL, WHICH IS TO BE SUBMITTED IN MAY TO SSOD, BUT HE CALLED CCD AN "AUTHORITATIVE AND EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL BODY ON DISARMAMENT." TIMES SAID FAVORING CONTINUATION OF CCD, SWEDEN AND MEXICO EXPRESSED VIEW, "GENERALLY SHARED BY 15 NONALIGNED MEMBER STATED," THAT U.S. AND USSR SHOULD ABANDON THEIR ROLE AS CO-CHAIRMEN ON GROUND THAT SUCH MOVE WOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR FRANCE AND CHINA TO JOIN DISCUSSIONS.

3. UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL REPORTED THAT FISHER IN HIS STATEMENT TO CCD "DID NOT REFER TO RECENT NATO INTELLIGENCE REPORTS THAT MOSCOW MAY BE DEVELOPING LETHAL

STRAINS OF BACTERIOLOGICAL VIRUSES IN VIOLATION OF 1975 TREATY PROHIBITING DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION AND USE OF BIOLOGICAL ARMS. NATO SOURCES CLAIMED THAT U.S. SATELLITES HAD DETECTED INSTALLATIONS NEAR MOSCOW WHICH MAY BE DEVELOPING MORE LETHAL STRAINS OF PLAGUE, ANTHRAX AND YELLOW FEVER VIRUSES."

4. UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL REPORTED THAT ADMINISTRATION ACKNOWLEDGED TODAY IT HAS MADE LITTLE PROGRESS CUTTING ARMS SALES ABROAD AMID CHARGES BY SOME CONGRESSIONAL CRI-UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 04 STATE 027831

TICS THAT SALES ACTUALLY HAVE INCREASED. "I WOULD BE LESS THAN CANDID IF I STATED THAT WE HAVE MADE GREAT PROGRESS TO DATE," SAID LESLIE GELB IN TESTIMONY PREPARED FOR HEARING IN HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY. UPI SAID GELB CLAIMED, HOWEVER, "WE HAVE BEGUN PROCESS." UPI SAID SENATOR PROXMIRE DOES NOT ACCEPT THAT WHEN GELB TESTIFIED BEFORE PROXMIRE'S SENATE BANKING COMMITTEE YESTERDAY, PROXMIRE SAID ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY OF CUTTING CONVENTIONAL ARMS SALES "IS MORE SMOKE THAN SUBSTANCE. FINE PRINT IN POLICY ACTUALLY ALLOWS ARMS SALES TO GROW, WHILE ADMINISTRATION CLAIMS IT IS REDUCING THEM."

5. UPI ALSO REPORTED THAT SENATE OPPONENTS OF B-ONE BOMBER HOPE TO "DRIVE FINAL NAIL INTO COFFIN OF 24 BILLION DOLLAR PROGRAM BY DEFEATING HOUSE ATTEMPT TO FORCE CONSTRUCTION OF TWO MORE OF COSTLY PLANES." UPI SAID LEADERS PLANNED TO SPEND MOST OF FEB. 1 DEBATING WHETHER 462 MILLION DOLLARS IN FUNDS APPROPRIATED FOR B-ONE LAST YEAR WILL BE CANCELED IN LINE WITH CARTER REQUEST. HOUSE REFUSED TO RESCIND MONEY IN VOTE AT CLOSE OF LAST YEAR'S SESSION ALTHOUGH EARLIER IT HAD AGREED BOMBER SHOULD BE DROPPED IN FAVOR OF CRUISE MISSILES. ALTHOUGH SENATE VOTED 59-36 AGAINST FUNDS FOR BOMBER LAST YEAR, OPPONENTS SAID THEY EXPECTED MARGIN TO BE CONSIDERABLY CLOSER NOW, UPI REPORTED.

6. HENRY BRADSHAW OF WASHINGTON STAR SAID WHEN USSR PROPOSES BAN ON SOME WEAPONS THAT U.S. HAS DEVELOPED BUT IT HAS NOT, SUCH AS NEUTRON BOMB, "THERE IS TENDENCY AROUND WASHINGTON TO DISMISS PROPOSAL AS MORE PROPAGANDISTIC THAN SERIOUS." BRADSHAW SAID CARTER'S SUGGESTION OF "TOTAL PROHIBITION" ON PUTTING NUCLEAR MATERIAL IN EARTH ORBIT RUNS DANGER OF BEING SIMILARLY DISMISSED. STAR UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 05 STATE 027831

CORRESPONDENT SAID U.S. HAS NOT SO FAR FELT NEED FOR NUCLEAR-POWERED SATELLITES, BUT USSR HAS BEEN USING THEM FOR MILITARY SURVEILLANCE OF OCEANS. SOME U.S. ANALYSTS, BRADSHER SAID, THINK SATELLITES ARE AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN LONG-TERM SOVIET EFFORT TO COUNTER U.S. MISSILE-LAUNCHING SUBMARINES. ADMINISTRATION IS NOW SETTING UP

INTERAGENCY GROUP TO STUDY WHAT IMMEDIATE RESPONSE U.S. SHOULD MAKE TO LAST WEEK'S CRASH LANDING IN CANADA OF NUCLEAR-POWERED SOVIET SATELLITE AND WHAT SHOULD BE DONE TO DEAL WITH FUTURE POSSIBILITIES OF THAT TYPE, BRADSHER SAID. VANCE

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